



Sen. Joe Zarelli's

UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

4/15/05

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Committee Assignments

- Ways & Means, Ranking Republican
- International Trade & Economic Development
- Rules

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Important Dates

Friday, April 15th is the last day to consider legislation originating in the opposite house. House bills must be out of the Senate, and Senate bills must be out of the House.

Sunday, April 24th is the last day of the 105-day regular session!

Dear Friends,

There is just over a week left in the 2005 legislative session. My days are now spent on the floor of the Senate with my colleagues, debating and voting on legislation that originated in the House. Once a bill is approved by both chambers, it is sent to the governor for his or her signature.

Here are a couple of smaller, but still important bills that are scheduled to be signed by the governor:

SSB 5775 – This proposal helps small cities with sidewalk and street maintenance and preservation by creating the Small City Preservation and Sidewalk Account in the State Treasury. Several small cities and towns in our district will finally be able to do the basic maintenance repairs and upkeep necessary to keep our roads and sidewalks safe.

2SSB 5154 – This legislation exempts certain historical properties from the leasehold excise tax. The bill is extremely narrow in nature, essentially allowing the city of Vancouver to keep ownership of part of the Vancouver National Historic Reserve without being taxed. I co-sponsored this bill.

I also wanted to let you know of a couple bills I voted against this week.

ESHB 1397 – This bill essentially forces Washington to adopt California's auto emission standards. This is a costly and unnecessary burden on auto dealers and taxpayers. First, Washington does not have the smog or pollution problems California has (Washington hasn't had a "bad air" day in over seven years). Second, by forcing auto dealers to comply by California's rules, we're going to see the average price for cars and trucks increase, possibly as high as \$3,000! And third, Cars are already 99 percent cleaner than the autos sold in the 1970s. Even though I voted no, the legislation still passed the Senate. But because it was amended, it must go back to the House for final approval.

HB 1268 – This is the famous "embryonic stem cell" bill. This legislation raised way too many ethical questions for me and is not backed by adequate scientific study. Research has now proven that umbilical cord stem cells hold enormous benefits and potential, while embryonic stem cells have yet to provide any medical value whatsoever.

The pro-life side of me definitely made me look at this issue closely, but the more I read about the lack of scientific or medical benefit coming from embryonic stem cells, I knew I could not vote for the bill. While testimony and support for both sides of this issue was compelling, I feel there were too many questions left unanswered. As I write this, the bill was defeated in the Senate by just a couple votes. However, there is still a chance it will come up for a vote again in the next few days.

Sincerely,